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Finding Your Friends in Japan

Learn how to ask and say the location of something

Mark Complete

Also Appears In: Conversational Japanese for Absolute Beginners, Absolute Beginner Season 2

Dialogue - Japanese

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Kanji | English | Rōmaji | Hiragana | All

A: はい、マクドナルド です。

B: マクドナルド は どこ に ありますか。

A: マクドナルド は 2かい に あります。

B: 2かい ... わかりました。

(to a passerby)

B: すみません、エスカレーター は どこ に ありますか？

A: エスカレーター7あそこ に あります。

Vocabulary

Hide

English | Kana | Rōmaji

どこ [どこ]
where

1 EXAMPLES

りーさん、出身はどこですか。
Mr. Lee, where are you from?
りーさん、しゅっしんはどこですか。

どこにありますか
where is there
どこにありますか

バスはどこですか。
Where is the bus stop?
バスていはどこにありますか。

出身はどこですか。
Where are you from?
しゅっしんはどこですか。

出身はどこですか。
Where is your hometown?
しゅっしんはどこですか。

トイレはどこですか。
Where is the bathroom?
トイレはどこですか。

ここはどこですか。
Where are we? (Literally: Where is here?)

2かい [にかい]
the second floor

1 EXAMPLE

いま、2かいにいます。
I'm on the second floor now.

マクドナルド [マクドナルド]
McDonald's (restaurant)

1 EXAMPLE

マクドナルドにいます。
I'm going to McDonald's.

かい [かい]
a counter for floor levels

1 EXAMPLE

いま、2かいにいます。
I'm on the second floor now.

あそこ [あそこ]
over there

1 EXAMPLE

エスカレーターはあそこにあります。
There is an escalator over there.

わかりました [わかりました]
Alright, I get it, OK

1 EXAMPLE

はい、わかりました。
Yes, I understand.

エスカレーター [エスカレーター]
escalator

1 EXAMPLE

エスカレーターはどこにありますか。
Where is the escalator?

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Lesson Notes

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Lesson Focus

The Focus of This Lesson Is Asking and Saying Where Something Is.
マクドナルド は どこ に ありますか。
Makudonarudo wa doko ni arimasu.
"McDonald's is on the second floor."

In the previous lesson, you learned how to ask and say where someone is using *doko ni imasu ka* and *[place] ni imasu*. In this lesson, you'll learn how to ask and say where something is using *arimasu*.

"Where Is [Thing]?" "It Is at [Place]."

Saying where a thing is uses exactly the same structure as saying where someone is.
The only difference is that you must replace the verb *imasu* ("exist" for people/animals) with *arimasu* ("exist" for inanimate objects).

* You can use this to give the location of not only things but also buildings and places around town (park, hospital, etc.)

Formation

[Thing] *wa doko ni arimasu ka*. → "[Thing] is at [place]"

To make this into a question and ask "Where is [thing/building]?" it's exactly the same structure as in the previous lesson: again, all we have to do is replace *imasu* with *arimasu*.

Formation

[Thing/building] *wa doko ni arimasu ka*. → "Where is [thing/building]?"

Sample Sentences

1. A: メニューはどこにありますか。
Menyū wa doko ni arimasu ka.
訳: ここにあります。
Koko ni arimasu.
A: "Where is the menu?"
B: "It's right here."
2. A: えんぴつはどこにありますか。
Enpitsu wa doko ni arimasu ka.
B: あそこにあります。
Asoko ni arimasu.
A: "Where is the pencil?"
B: "It's over there."

Asking the Location of Things/People: *Doko Desu Ka/Doko Ni Arimasu Ka/Doko Ni Imasu Ka*

Remember how in the previous lesson we said that we can use *A wa doko desu ka* for both people and animals AND objects? In short, ***doko* = neutral**.

If you just keep in mind that **arimasu = inanimate objects** and **imasu = people/animals**, then you'll be fine.

For Example:

1. ねこはどこですか。
O: ***Neko wa doko desu ka.***
"Where is the cat?"
OK, as *doko* = neutral
2. ねこはどこにいますか。
O: ***Neko wa doko ni imasu ka.***
"Where is the cat?"
OK, as *imasu* = people/animals
3. ひょうたんはどこですか。
O: ***Jun-san wa doko desu ka.***
"Where is Jun?"
OK, as *doko* = neutral
4. ひょうたんはどこにいますか。
O: ***Jun-san wa doko ni imasu ka.***
"Where is Jun?"
OK, as *imasu* = people/animals
5. ペンはどこですか。
O: ***Pen wa doko desu ka.***
"Where is the pen?"
OK, as *doko* = neutral
6. えーびはどこですか。
X: ***Pen wa doko ni imasu ka.***
NO, as a pen is NOT a person or animal! The correct version would be... ペンはどこにありますか。
O: ***Pen wa doko ni arimasu ka.***
"Where is the pen?"
OK, as *arimasu* = inanimate objects

Reference

- numbers from zero to ten → Absolute Beginner Season 2 Lesson 1
- *doko* → Absolute Beginner Season 1 Lesson 13
- *imasu* → Absolute Beginner Season 1 Lesson 20
- *arimasu* → Absolute Beginner Season 1 Lesson 19
- *asoko* → Absolute Beginner Season 1 Lesson 19

Key Vocabulary & Phrases

● ～かい (*-kai*)

In Japanese, when you count nouns (as in "one table," "two tables..."), you have to add a word known as a counter to the number. In the dialogue, we had the word for "second floor" (にかい (*nikai*). This is made up of the number two, *ni*, and the counter for "floor," *kai*. Here's how to say the other floors of a building... We cover the numbers from zero to ten in Absolute Beginner Season 2 Lesson 1.

JAPANESE	ROMANIZATION	'ENGLISH'
いっかい	*ikkai*	"first floor"
にかい	*ni-kai*	"second floor"
さんがい・さんがい *	*san-gai/san-kai*	" third floor"
よんかい	*yon-kai*	"fourth floor"
ごかい	*go-kai*	"fifth floor"
ろっかい *	*rokkai*	" sixth floor"
ななかい	*nana-kai*	"seventh floor"
はっかい・はちかい *	*hakkai/hachi-kai*	" eighth floor"
きゅうかい	*kyū-kai*	"ninth floor"
じゅっかい *	*jukkai*	" tenth floor"

* Be careful with the numbers three, six, and eight in Japanese: they often have different pronunciations when counting things. Here, please note that the standard forms for third floor, sixth floor, and eighth floor have alternative pronunciations. We can pronounce "third floor" as either san-kai or san-gai. Similarly, we can say "eighth floor" as *hachi-kai* or *hak-kai* (with the final *-i* of *hachi* omitted), but with "sixth floor," there is only one way to say it: not *roku-kai*, which is rather hard to say anyway, but *rok-kai*, with the *-u* of *roku* omitted. As for "tenth floor," the historical sound formation rule was applied and *ju-kai* has changed to *ju-kkai*. Some people might say *jikkai* instead but *jukkai* is more common now. If you are interested in the history of Japanese sound formation, leave us a comment in the comment section!

● わかりました (*wakarimashita*)

This is the polite version of わかった (*wakatta*). It's in the past tense, so it literally means "I have understood," but we use it in the same way as the English "I understand" or "Got it." You use this in Japanese to show you have heard something (information, a command from a superior, some advice, etc.) and have taken it on board.

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Grammar

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Below is a list of the grammar points introduced or used in this lesson. Click for a full explanation.

ある *aru* to be, to exist (of inanimate things), to have	Introduced
いる (1) *iru* (1) to exist (for animate, usually living, things)	Used

Lesson Transcript

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